Commonwealth of Virginia

Integrated Criminal Justice Information System (ICJIS)

Strategic Implementation Plan

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1.0   Introduction

The Commonwealth of Virginia's Integrated Criminal Justice Information System (ICJIS) program is an initiative of the Secretary of Public Safety and the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS). The ICJIS program is a response to the growing need to obtain greater efficiencies in the criminal justice system through improved inter-agency cooperation and information sharing.

In the ICJIS vision, the primary objective of integration is to improve criminal justice processing and decision-making through the elimination of duplicate data entry, access to information that is not otherwise available, and the timely sharing of critical data.

As in other states, the processing of a case through Virginia's criminal justice system—from investigation of a crime through arrest, prosecution, trial, corrections, and post-corrections activities—requires the cooperation of a multitude of people and agencies crossing many organizational and/or geographic boundaries. The key to the effective functioning of the system is the flow of accurate and timely information among the independent agencies.

Unfortunately, the vast majority of information transfers between agencies are still performed manually, and sometimes not at all. Agencies often independently capture the same data, causing redundant effort and opportunities for errors and inconsistencies. Even when two agencies wish to share relevant data, they may not be able to easily do so due to lack of enterprise-wide data standards and incompatibilities in agency computer systems.

Over the years, Virginia criminal justice agencies have taken several positive steps to address these problems. Without a unifying "big picture" view of the problems and solutions, however, there can be little assurance that independent piecemeal solutions will ultimately tie together cost effectively.

What is needed is a strategic approach that facilitates more fully integrated management of information among all Virginia criminal justice agencies, while at the same time ensuring compatibility with emerging integration standards at the state, federal, and international levels. ICJIS is Virginia's response to these requirements.

This Information Technology (IT) integration implementation plan is a high-level strategic plan describing near-term implementation priorities of the ICJIS program and how the program proposes to organize and fund a project to achieve those priorities. The plan is the result of activities funded in part by an assistance grant to DCJS from the National Governors' Association (NGA). The topics covered in this plan are based on guidance received from the NGA.

2.0   Priority Integration Objectives

Within the context of wider integration objectives, the ICJIS program has selected the following two critical integration objectives as near-term priorities:

- Design and implementation of an Integrated Magistrate System, including several new inter-agency interfaces based on standardized Offense Tracking Numbers (OTNs) and Offense Codes; and

- Identification of changes needed by other agencies to facilitate integration.

The ICJIS program has already initiated activity on both priorities and expects to achieve critical preliminary results within an 18-month timeframe. These activities, expected results, and their relationship to broader ICJIS integration goals are described below.

2.1   Relationship of Integrated Magistrate System to Broader Goals

An Integrated Magistrate System is a critical priority because, in Virginia's criminal justice system, local magistrate offices are typically where new charges are filed against suspected offenders. Basic information about charges and suspects are initially captured by local magistrates in the form of arrest warrants, which then become the basis for all subsequent case processing by the many other agencies in the state criminal justice community.

Virginia magistrates are currently supported by stand-alone PC-based computer systems. Three major integration problems will be addressed by upgrading these systems:

- An Integrated Magistrate System will provide a logical starting point for implementation of a standardized OTN to be used by all Virginia criminal justice agencies to track a case as it progresses through the system. At present, different agencies use different internally generated unique identifiers to track the same case, making sharing and correlating case data extremely difficult. Agreement on an enterprise-wide standard OTN is a fundamental prerequisite to achieving larger integration objectives.

- An Integrated Magistrate System will provide the opportunity to reach inter-agency agreement on standardized Offense Codes, as well as other common data items. At present, different agencies use different coding systems to categorize charges (e.g., statute codes versus Virginia crime codes), which do not translate cleanly on a charge-per-charge basis. Agreement on enterprise-wide standards for offense codes, as well as other shared data items, is another basic prerequisite to achieving overall integration objectives.

- An Integrated Magistrate System will provide the opportunity to implement network interfaces between magistrates and external agency systems for booking, criminal histories, wanted persons, and emergency protective orders. At present, all other criminal justice agencies must manually recapture or re-enter magistrate charge information into their computer systems, resulting in redundant effort and potential data quality control problems. Establishing basic network interfaces between magistrates and other agencies is a key cornerstone of the wider integration effort.

The ICJIS program has initiated an inter-agency Charge Standardization Project to establish the necessary data standards and to begin implementation of an Integrated Magistrate System.

2.2 Relationship of Identification of Changes to Broader Goals

The second near-term integration priority—identification of changes needed by other agencies to facilitate integration—is critical because it is a prerequisite to finalizing decisions on system design approaches, work plans, and budget requirements.

This is an ongoing activity of the ICJIS program. Through surveys and interviews with subject matter experts, DCJS has analyzed existing business processes and computer systems within stakeholder agencies. In cooperation with the agencies, DCJS is currently developing an overall ICJIS system architecture to identify specific upgrades needed for existing agency systems to support integration objectives.

3.0 Policy, Budget, and Legislative Actions Required

The ICJIS program has obtained partial funding towards implementation of an Integrated Magistrate System and has initiated a subproject called the ICJIS Charge Standardization Project (CSP), Phase 1, to implement core capabilities over an 18-month period.

Throughout the project, inter-agency policy issues are being addressed cooperatively via a Charge Standardization Subcommittee made up of representatives of all stakeholder agencies. The subcommittee meets on a regular basis and is responsible for approving major decisions on project plans, business processes, and technical approaches. The subcommittee is a subset of a larger ICJIS Steering Committee that advises the overall ICJIS program.

DCJS has already coordinated with state legislators to introduce all legislation needed to enable the type of information sharing to be implemented by the integrated magistrate system. House Bills No. 2676 and 2842 were both introduced in January 2001, and are proceeding through the committee process.

The funding secured so far is sufficient to design and implement basic capabilities of an integrated magistrate system. Additional (as yet unidentified) funding is still required to provide incentive grants to localities to install and begin using the new interfaces after implementation. An estimated $3M is required for this purpose.

4.0 Leadership and Governance Resources Required

As a major multi-agency integration project, the ICJIS and its subprojects require the committed support of state decision-makers with the responsibility to promote enterprise-wide strategic objectives. Support is also needed at the working level from agency executives and IT managers who will be most directly affected by ICJIS implementation.

DCJS is the logical organizational focal point for overall management of the ICJIS effort. DCJS, one of 12 agencies within Virginia's Secretariat of Public Safety, is charged with planning and carrying out programs and initiatives to improve the functioning and effectiveness of the criminal justice system as a whole. (§9-170 of the Code of Virginia)

DCJS has created a small but highly capable ICJIS program unit with dedicated responsibility for planning and coordinating ICJIS integration activities. The ICJIS program has visibility above the DCJS level via reviews by the Public Safety IT Oversight Committee and the Secretary of Public Safety.

Recognizing that implementation of the ICJIS vision requires buy-in from many independent agencies and jurisdictions, DCJS organized an inter-agency Steering Committee to advise the program. The Steering Committee membership includes representatives from ten key stakeholder agencies:

- Department of State Police

- Department of Juvenile Justice

- Supreme Court of Virginia

- Department of Corrections

- Department of Motor Vehicles

- State Compensation Board

- Department of Information Technology

- Department of Technology Planning

- Chesterfield County (representing county governments)

- Department of Criminal Justice Services.

The Steering Committee meets on a regular basis to receive briefings from project staff and to provide guidance on major decisions. It will be asked to help finalize and approve ICJIS plans and standards for achieving system integration objectives. At a working level, the Steering Committee will be the mechanism for ensuring agency buy-in to key decisions throughout the duration of the program.

As previously noted, a subcommittee of the Steering Committee has been formed to provide more detailed guidance to the Charge Standardization Project. Other subcommittees and working groups will be formed as needed to guide other subprojects as they are formed.

In addition to executive commitment, successful ICJIS implementation requires buy-in from the state legislature. First, some integration objectives require enabling legislation regarding the sharing of information among agencies. Second, the legislature will be asked to approve budget requests funding ICJIS implementation activities.

DCJS has established appropriate lines of communication with the legislature to lay the groundwork for future budget requests. As previously noted, two bills have been introduced in the current legislative session to enable CSP implementation.

5.0   Project Strategic Plan

In the early stages of the ICJIS program, securing adequate and stable long-range funding for ICJIS implementation has been a major focus. The ICJIS program is grateful for funding sources, such as the NGA, that have provided short-term grant funding to support basic program planning and system engineering activities to this point.

At present, funds have been identified for two major areas of program activity:

- Implementation of a basic Integrated Magistrate System

- Development of basic plans and system engineering analyses, such as the project Business Case, a Project Management Plan, an enterprise-level Data Dictionary, and an agency-by-agency Computer System Assessment.

Much of the program's current strategic planning is focused on identifying and securing additional funding to fulfill the following integration priorities:

- Implementation of interfaces to the Integrated Magistrate System by statewide localities

- Implementation of full interfaces to the Integrated Magistrate System by state agencies

- Upgrade of other existing state systems to facilitate integration

- Implementation of a technical architecture (infrastructure) to support statewide integration.

5.1   Plans to Secure Financing

The ICJIS program is pursuing two potential funding sources: state money from the general fund and federal grant money. To better position the program to request and obtain additional funding, the ICJIS program is taking the following actions:

- DCJS has developed a detailed ICJIS Business Case document explaining the objectives of the program and why it deserves the support of decision-makers and funding sources. An Executive Summary of the Business Case will be distributed to key decision-makers well in advance of the next major budget request, with the full Business Case available for their review.

- DCJS has developed a separate Business Case document explaining the benefits of the CSP project. This document will also be available to key decision-makers in advance of additional CSP funding requests.

- As the first partial implementation of the ICJIS concept, the CSP Phase 1 system will inevitably be regarded by decision-makers as a feasibility test of the wider ICJIS concept. DCJS plans for CSP development include early implementation of proof-of-concept demonstration capabilities.

- DCJS has initiated the coordination necessary to make ICJIS a priority for inclusion in the next biennial state budget.

Definition of changes required to agency systems is one of the two near-term priorities because that information is needed to support budgetary estimates. In order to give decision-makers a consolidated view of ICJIS budget requirements, DCJS will coordinate ICJIS-related resource requirements and cost estimates as they are developed. DCJS will then submit a consolidated budget request through appropriate executive channels.

5.2   Performance Measures

DCJS will evaluate and report the benefits realized from ICJIS implementation throughout the course of the program. Participating agencies will cooperate with DCJS to collect and report the necessary raw data from within their agencies.

Certain types of benefits are open to numerical and statistical reporting. Such categories might include cost reduction or avoidance, improved agency productivity, reduced case latency, increased case throughput, decreased information response time, data error reduction, etc. In such cases, DCJS will cooperate with participating agencies to collect the required raw data in an unobtrusive manner.

There are other types of benefits that are inherently subjective, intangible, or otherwise difficult to measure. Examples might include improved worker morale, improved public confidence, and improved public safety (e.g., by getting criminals off the street quicker). In some cases, subjective benefits could be numerically evaluated using techniques like periodic surveys. In other cases, evidence of benefits may have to be captured anecdotally.

Specific performance measures to be applied to the CSP will be included in a CSP project plan.

5.3   Project Timetable

The ICJIS program is recommending a gradual approach to implementation, spread out in phases over several years, rather than a one-time "big bang" approach. There is enough management complexity associated with planning and coordinating multiple agency integration activities to warrant a one-step-at-a-time approach.

As shown in Figure 1, the ICJIS implementation plan is organized into a series of two-year phases to reflect Virginia's biennial budgeting cycle.
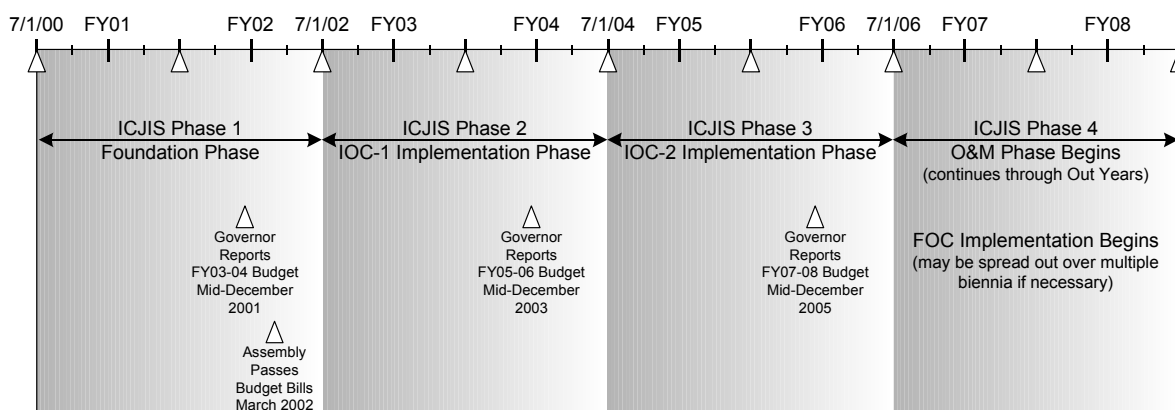
Figure 1: ICJIS phases based on Virginia's two-year budgeting cycle

The ICJIS program proposes to implement an Initial Operating Capability 1 (IOC-1) during the next biennium (FY02-04), including implementation of a core infrastructure and integration of selected high-priority agency systems and users. The ICJIS program proposes to complete implementation of an Initial Operating Capability (IOC-2) during the following biennium (FY04-06), completing the integration of all designated high-priority agency systems and users. Additional systems and capabilities will be considered for integration in the out years beyond FY04-06, as resources permit, leading to achievement of a Full Operating Capability (FOC).

The current budget biennium (FY00-02) is designated as Phase 1, the Foundation Phase, during which the program is laying the technical and programmatic groundwork for successful ICJIS implementation in the following phases.

The two integration priorities described in this plan are both major activities within Phase 1. The CSP project will implement a core integrated magistrate system during Phase 1, with further development and integration to occur in Phases 2 and 3, depending on availability of funds and other resources. The identification of changes needed on other agency systems will be completed in Phase 1 and then updated as necessary in later phases.

5.4   Role of the Governor

Governor James Gilmore has demonstrated his support for the ICJIS in general, and for the CSP project in particular, through policy statements and executive actions.

In a wider context, Governor Gilmore has demonstrated support and commitment to making Virginia a leader in the application of advanced information technologies to the delivery of government services to the citizens of Virginia. For example, Governor Gilmore created the nation's first office of a Secretary of Technology by Executive Order in May 1998, appointing Donald W. Upson to the position. In August 1998, Governor Gilmore announced the creation of the Council on Technology Services (COTS), chaired by the Secretary of Technology, to develop a blueprint for state government IT planning and decision-making.

The Governor's continuing support will be critical as the ICJIS program's request for additional state funding proceeds through the budgeting process. The Governor's support is also important for encouraging continued agency cooperation in implementing changes to their systems to facilitate greater integration.

6.0   References

For more detailed information regarding the program, readers should consult the following documents:

- ICJIS Business Case

- Charge Standardization Project (CSP) Business Case

- ICJIS Project Management Plan.

These documents are available from the program office on request by contacting:

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